

(Washington, DC)— A bill expected to pass the House of Representatives today contains two provisions secured by Congresswoman Gwen Moore (D-Wisc.) that will directly benefit economic development and transportation in Milwaukee. The House version of the Transportation, and Housing and Urban Development Appropriations Act for fiscal year 2010 contains \$250,000 for Riverworks Development Corporation to purchase blighted and abandoned buildings in the Five Point Exchange area, the condition of which has discouraged new businesses from developing in the Harambee neighborhood. These funds will support this non-profit economic development organization in its mission to revitalize this area of Milwaukee.

In addition, Congresswoman Moore secured \$500,000 in the House bill for the Milwaukee County Transit System (MCTS) to replace a number of standard 40-foot buses that have already been in use beyond their average life expectancy of 12 years. MCTS has been unable to purchase new buses because of budgetary constraints.

The Senate will now consider the bill.

“Both of these projects will help make Milwaukee a more vibrant place to live and do business,” Congresswoman Moore said. “These funds will pay dividends on the ground in Milwaukee by helping to renew the Harambee neighborhood into a place where more people want to live, shop and do business. As the Riverworks Development Corporation is able to purchase run-down buildings and make improvements, their work will attract new and much-needed investments in the community. The result will be new jobs, better-looking business, new landscaping, pedestrian amenities and all-around improvements to the area.

“Furthermore, with the funds headed to MCTS for new buses, the city’s transit system will be able to purchase new vehicles that do not need constant maintenance. Milwaukee residents deserve reliable transportation and the assurance that they will be able to get to and from work and school on time.”

Since 2006, MCTS has been unable to purchase the new buses it needs because of tightening budgets, and maintenance and service issues are starting to burden the system. These funds will help with some of the \$62 million project to replace the buses.

The Five Point project is expected to create more than 50 jobs in the Harambee area and attract more than \$15 million in new investment.

“The Appropriations Funding will help spur other development activities in the Five Point Exchange area and create jobs in the Harambee Community,” said Darryl Johnson, Executive Director of the Riverworks Development Corporation. “It will bring back hope to an area that has seen major disinvestment and an increase in abandoned buildings and vacant lots. In a very significant manner it will change the perception of the area. We are extremely excited about the opportunity to broaden our efforts to make this area a more viable place for businesses to locate.”

“The funds will be a great help to the Milwaukee County Transit System,” said Lloyd Grant, Jr., Deputy Director of the Milwaukee Country Transit System. “At this time, we have a desperate need for funds to begin replacement of an aging bus fleet in order to continue to provide the riding public with quality and reliable transit services.”

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